However, in spite of the devastation in some areas outside government control, in others the local economy is reportedly flourishing. In particular the opium poppy is grown in large quantities in some areas and by the mid-1980's was bringing in over $100 million p.a. Elsewhere, inns and bazaars have sprung up along the routes used by *mujahidin* and refugees.

C AVERAGE STANDARD OF LIVING

In the 1970's Afghanistan was classified by the United Nations as one of the world's twenty poorest countries; per capita income was around $116 p.a. Living standards were undoubtedly low, but poverty did not seem quite as grinding as in parts of the subcontinent for example, nor were the cities surrounded by the shanty-towns so familiar in some other parts of Asia. Living standards are unlikely to have improved significantly subsequently.

D PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS

Until the late 1970's the majority of Afghans (as many as 85%) were sedentary or transhumant peasant cultivators, share-croppers or landless labourers or pastoral nomads. There were still as many as two million of the latter, mostly Pashtuns (both Ghilzai and Durrani), Baluchis, Gujers and Arabs. They lived off their considerable flocks of sheep and goats, using camels, donkeys and horses (and recently trucks) for transport, often supplementing their pastoral activities with trading, money-lending and agriculture. They were to be found throughout much of the country, moving to and from summer pastures in the central and north-eastern mountains in spring and autumn (about 50,000 still crossed the border into Pakistan for the winter). Pastoral nomads appear to have been particularly badly affected by the war.

The countryside also supports a small population of specialists such as blacksmiths, carpenters, millers and barbers, while in the towns there are many small workshops in which a variety of crafts are still practised. Clothes, furniture, jewellery, pots and pans, stoves, pottery, shoes, ropes, felts and saddles are just some of the items still locally made. The famous Turkmen carpets are woven at home by women and women generally make rugs and do embroidery. The number of men employed in modern industry and mining is still small, probably not more than 100,000. Even under socialist control, the economy remains predominantly a small-scale, free-enterprise one, with as much as three-quarters of it in the hands of small operators.

III Population

A. VITAL STATISTICS

In the 1970's the population was variously estimated at anywhere between 13 and 19 million, though in the absence of any reliable census most experts agreed tnat it was approaching 15 million by the end of the decade. The great majority still lived in the countryside, of whom some 15% were pastoral nomads, while of the cities, Kabul, with about half a million people, was much the largest.

Since 1978 the picture has altered dramatically. The population has declined by more than 40%, as many as 9% having died as a direct or indirect result of the fighting and another 33% having become refugees, mostly in Iran or Pakistan. There has been a considerable shift in population within the country, with some 11% of the rural population moving to urban areas, in particular Kabul, for safety. Overall the urban population has increased from 15 to 24%; that of Kabul trebling to at least a million and a half. It is estimated that the rural population has declined from 85% to 23%, though some areas are more markedly depopulated than others.*

B. LANGUAGE

A large number of different languages, mostly belonging to the Indo-Iranian and Turkish families, are spoken in Afghanistan of which the two official languages, Pashtu and Dari (Persian) are the most important. Pashtu is spoken in the south and south-east, while Dari and other Persian dialects such as Hazaragi, are widely spoken in the rest of the country, including Kabul, where Dari is the lingua franca. In parts of Badakhshan, languages belonging to the Eastern Iranian group are found. Elsewhere in the north Turkish dialects are spoken by considerable numbers of people: other important languages are Baluchi, Pashai and the Kafiri dialects of Nuristan.

C. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION

1 Ethnicity

Afghan society befo... was characterised by a high degree of social fragmentation and the ... of 'national' social and political associations. In these circum... generalisations about Afghan social organisation have to be treated w... ...aution. ...city is a good example. In Afghanistan language, sectarian affiliation, beliefs about common origins, history and descent, possession of a segmentary lineage ideology and culture in general, are among the possible components of 'ethnic' identity. They can be used to identify a large number number of ethnic types (see table 2[1]).

* Marek Sliwinski *Afghanistan 1978-1987:war, demography & society* a preliminary report

However, the scope and significance of these ethnic labels is not always obvious. Ethnic identities are categories in terms of which people identify and interact with each other and are often accompanied by diacritical differences in dress, diet and so on. But ethnic labels do not refer to bounded social groups occupying their own territories, and ethnic maps showing discrete areas of the country occupied by distinct ethnic groups can be misleading. Especially in the north people with different ethnic identities often live in the same village, if in different residential sections. Nor is ethnic identity the basis for the formation of interest groups competing for spoils in the national political arena.

Nevertheless, ethnic identity and political affiliation are sometimes associated at both local and national levels. In particular the fact that the Afghan state has been dominated by Pashtuns (especially Durranis) means that people in the north and west often resent the Pashtun domination and colonisation which has been going on since the late 19th century. In some multi-ethnic areas antagonism between local groups takes an ethnic form. In the north, Tajiks, and to some extent Uzbeks as well, have since 1978 often joined the *Jamiat-i-Islami*, led by the Tajik Burhannudin Rabbani, while Pashtun immigrants to the region have tended to follow the Pashtun Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's *Hizb-i-Islami*. At the same time, disparities of wealth and power were beginning in some areas to give rise to a degree of class consciousness in which shared economic status or lack of it was seen as transcending different ethnic affiliations.

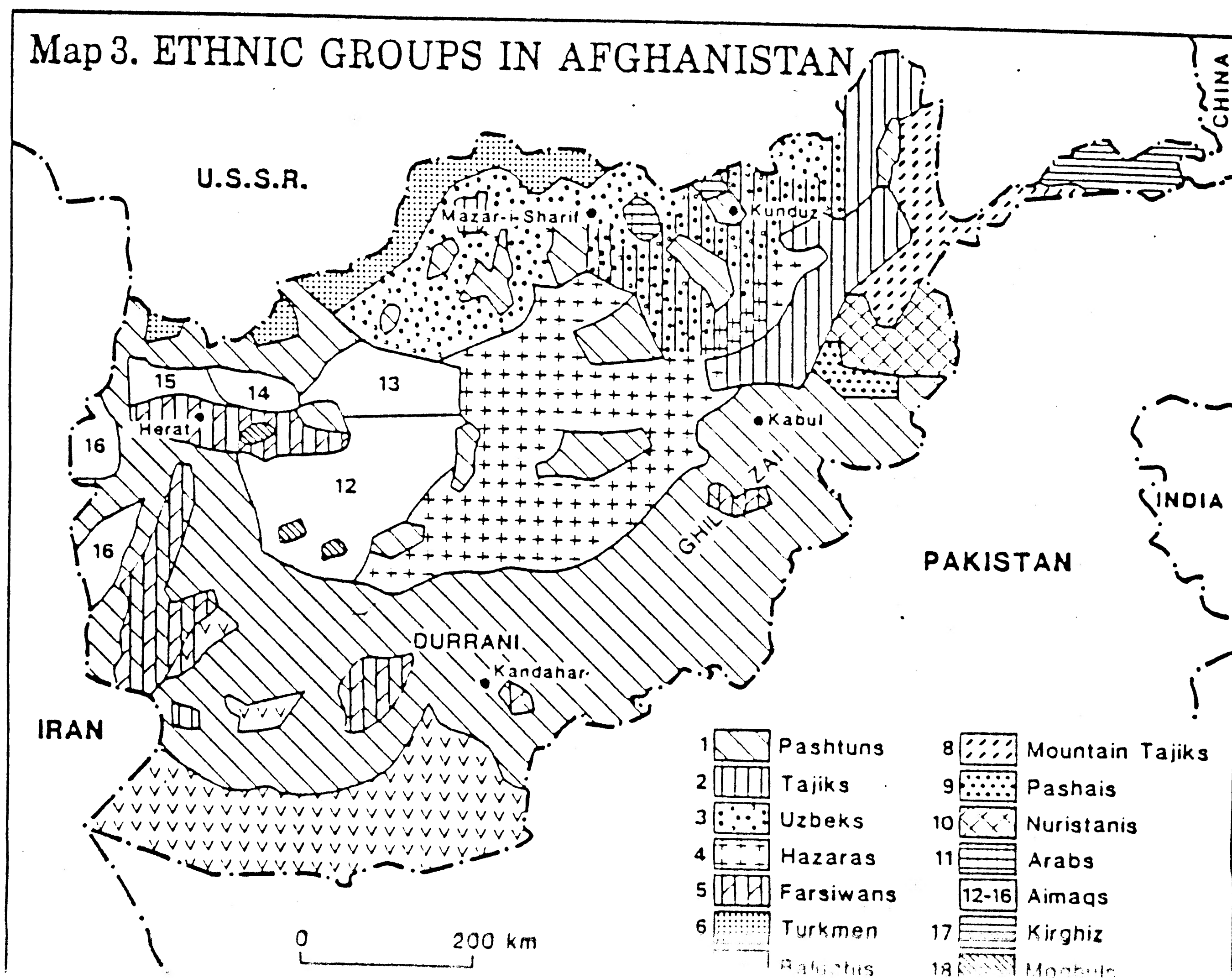


Table Two ETHNIC GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN

NAME	POPULATION	LANGUAGE	SECT	LOCATION
1 Pashtuns	6.5 million	Pashtu/Pakhtu	Sunni	South, south-east, scattered across north and west*
2 Tajiks	3.5 million	Dari	Sunni	Mostly in north
3 Uzbeks	1 million	Uzbek (eastern Turkish dialect)	Sunni	North
4 Hazaras	1 million	Dari	Imami	Hazarajat
5 Farsiwans	600,000	Dari	Imami	West
6 Turkmen	100,000	Turkmen (southern Turkish dialect)	Sunni	North-west
7 Baluchis	100,000	Baluchi	Sunni	South-west
8 Mountain Tajiks (Pamiris)	100,000	Eastern Iranian languages	Sunni or Ismaili	North-east
9 Pashais	100,000	Pashai	Sunni	Laghman
10 Nuristanis	100,000	Kafiri dialects	Sunni	Nuristan
11 Arabs	80,000	Dari	Sunni	Spread across north
12 Taimanis	200,000	Dari	Sunni	Ghor, Badghis
13 Firozkohis	120,000	Dari	Sunni	Ghor, Badghis
14 Aimaq Hazaras	50,000	Dari	Sunni	Badghis
15 Jamshidis	40,000	Dari	Sunni	Badghis
16 Taimuris	40,000	Dari	Sunni	Herat
17 Kirghiz	2,500**	Kirghiz (central Turkish dialect)	Sunni	Eastern Wakhan
18 Moghuls	10,000	Dari	Sunni	Pockets in centre and north

* many Pakhtun settlers in the north have reportedly returned to the south since the war began

** about 2,000 went to Turkey in the early 1980's, having become refugees in northern Pakistan

The groups numbered from 12 to 16 in Table 2 belong to the general category *aimaq* (a Turkish word meaning 'tribe'), and Taimanis, Firozkohis, Aimaq Hazaras, and Jamshidis used to be referred to as the Chahar Aimaq (4 tribes) but this grouping has little significance today. There are other smaller *aimaqs* in western Afghanistan such as the Zuris. Among other Afghan ethnic groups worth noting are the Imami Qizilbash, an almost entirely urban group, Gujers, pastoral nomads in the east, and remnants of various Turkish-speaking groups such as Kazakhs and Karakalpaks.

2 Tribalism

Afghan society is often described as a tribal one. If by 'tribal' is meant the existence of social groupings larger than the local community formed on the basis of supposed common patrilineal descent (if not a full-blown segmentary lineage ideology), it is principally among Pashtuns, and to some extent Turkmen, Pashais and Nuristanis, that tribal identities retain much significance today. Tribalism in this sense among such groups as the Aimaqs, Hazaras, Arabs, Baluchis and Uzbeks nowadays has little significance. If on the other hand, a 'tribe' is simply taken to be a group with strong sense of local identity and independence, then rural Hazaras and Tajiks living in remoter regions like the Hazarajat, the upper Panjshir or Badakhshan may still be described as 'tribal'.

As far as Pashtuns are concerned, many Pashtuns in Afghanistan still think of themselves as belonging to one of two great 'tribal' confederations based on an ideology of shared (mostly patrilineal) descent from a common ancestor. These are the Durranis (or Abdalis), whose homeland is around Kandahar (and who often call themselves Afghans hence the name Afghanistan*) and the Ghilzais, who occupy the region between Qalat and Wardak. The others belong to the smaller 'independent' tribes (*qabayel*) mostly living near the Pakistani border such as the Mohmands, Jajis, Jadrans, Khugianis, Safis, Mangals and Shinwaris. The principal Durrani tribes are the Ishaqzai, Alizai, and Nurzai (Panjpao), and the Achakzai, Barakzai, Popolzai and Alikozai (Zirak). The main Ghilzai ones are, from south to north, the Hotak, Tokhi, Nasir, Taraki, Kharoti, Andar, Suleiman Khel and Ahmadzai. One important aspect of 'tribal' identity is often possession of a distinctive code of customary law and behaviour. This is most obvious among Pakhtuns, particularly among Ghilzais and the 'independent' tribes, who follow what they call Pashtunwali (the 'way of the Pashtuns'), the main elements of which are hospitality (*melmastia*), [illegible]venge (*badal*) in defence of honou[illegible]holised by protection of [illegible]men's chastity and homeland), and dec[illegible]king in the tribal council [illegible]*rga*) (see also section 8). Durranis b[illegible]st have always tended to [illegible]ve fairly [illegible]g leaders.

3 The Local Community

Regardless of ethnic identity, the most enduring social institution in modern Afghanistan has tended to be the local community (*qawm* - a word also used for other groupings). Its nucleus is a group of from 50 to two or three hundred people who believe themselves to share descent from a common ancestor, live near and socialize with each other, intermarry,

* some other Pashtu-speaking tribes such as the Mohmands, Shinwaris and Yusufazais of Swat in Pakistan also call themselv[illegible]

have their own elders (*mui /rish sefids* - 'white beards') and an officially-recognised headman (*malik/arbab*) who represents them in their dealings with authority. The *qawm* is not necessarily egalitarian: wealthy and ambitious men often use fellow *qawm* members as supporters in contests for local influence and the status of *khan* or *bey* with rivals from other *qawms*. In spite of this, the importance of the local community is likely to have been increased by the breakdown of governmental authority in rural areas since 1978.

At the same time, it is worth being aware of the extent to which people will cooperate with others from different *qawms* when necessary, for example in the organisation of the often very complex irrigation systems. Traditionally, various types of 'coalition' interposed themselves between the local community and the state, based on tribal membership, locality, followings of 'saints' (see section V. C), patron-client networks and Islam.

D. MARRIAGE, THE FAMILY, SEX ROLES AND LIFE-STYLE

Usually only the better-off can afford to live in a residentially extended family (ideally consisting of a group of brothers and their parents, wives and children), though this is the preferred form in rural areas. In poorer families, sons often have to move away to find work. Marriage with a close relative (1st or 2nd cousin) is preferred and tends to bring members of the *qawm* closer together. Polygamy is relatively rare. In the late 1970's marriages were still arranged by parents and a man's family had to pay a considerable sum (often several times average yearly income) to a woman's for her hand in marriage. This and the often extravagant feasting and gift-giving which accompanied weddings often led to people falling into debt.

Women (except among the small, westernised elite in the cities) do not usually work outside the home. Apart from nomad and westernised women, they always wear a *chadri* (a garment covering the body from head to foot with a mesh over the face to permit some vision) in public. Men and women do not mix outside the home. Men take the important decisions in the family and are very jealous of the honour of the women for whom they are responsible and dislike it if they come into even the most minimal contact with other than closely related men. Generally speaking, Afghan culture values physical courage, ability to cope with pain and assertiveness.

E. FOOD AND HOSPITALITY

Afghans do not eat pork. A kind of flat bread (*nan*) is the basic item of diet; it is cooked in a tandoori oven, on a griddle or on heated stones. *Kabab*, made of pieces of meat cooked on a skewer over a grill is a popular dish, as are various kinds of *pilau* (rice with meat or vegetables), and in the north several dishes made with pasta, for example a kind of soup made with noodles (*ash*). Afghans do not drink alcohol, tea being the most popular drink. Smoking is not all that common, especially outside the cities, but many people use *naswar*, a kind of mouth snuff made from tobacco mixed with lime. Cutlery is not much used for eating, food being served in large dishes on a cloth spread on the floor, from which everyone eats with the right hand. The importance of hospitality is worth emphasizing. People should welcome strangers and be generous to them

and give them their protection while they are in their houses. Those who can afford it have a special guest room in which to entertain visitors.

F. HOUSING

In the cities western-style houses and flats are becoming more common, but traditionally design and construction varied with climate, terrain and available materials. The basic house type is single-storey, made of sun-dried mud brick with a flat roof of twigs and rammed earth and has a yard with a pool and a flowerbed, and is surrounded by a high wall to ensure privacy. Pakhtuns like to live in isolated, fortress-like *qalas*, while in the forested mountains of Nuristan, houses are made of wood, often built on top of each other up the hillsides. In the south-west houses may have domed roofs and a ventilating chimney to channel cooler air from outside into the dwelling. Pastoral nomads mostly live in black felt tents, while villagers and semi-nomads in the north often spend all or part of the summer in round, felt-covered yurts.

IV <u>History</u>

A. ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

As a state Afghanistan dates only from the late 19th century, but the land of Afghanistan has a long and complex history. It has formed part of numerous empires, the first of which we have recorded knowledge being that of the Persian Achaemenids (559-331 B.C.). Northern Afghanistan was the home of Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism, which became the religion of the Achaemenid empire under Cyrus the Great (559-510 B.C.). The empire was destroyed in the 4th century B.C. by Alexander the Great (d.323 B.C.), whose conquest of Afghanistan and early death left much of the country in the hands of rulers of Greek origin. Buddhism became the dominant religious influence under the North Indian Mauryan rulers (324-184 B.C.) and the central Asian Kushans (ca. 75 B.C.-A.D.220). Subsequently another Persian dynasty, the Sassanians (230-642) ruled the country until the 7th century when the Arabs, under the stimulus of Islam, conquered Iran and northern Afghanistan. Not until the 10th century though did the greater part of the country become Muslim.

From the late 10th century to the early 13th centuries, Afghanistan was ruled by the Ghaznavid and Ghorid dynasties, but this prosperous and cultured era ended when the M[illegible]'s under the leadership of Genghis Khan, devastated the country in 122[illegible]. In the late 14th century there was a recovery, and Herat became the capital of a new Islamic empire created by a descendant of Genghis Khan's, Timur-i-Leng (Tamburlane). This collapsed at the end of the 15th century, and Afghanistan was fought over by the Moghul empire, based in northern India, the Iranian Safavid empire with its capital at Isfahan, and the central Asian Uzbeks; not surprisingly it was an era of economic and cultural decay.

B. THE DURRANI EMPIRE, THE ANGLO-AFGHAN WARS AND THE CREATION OF THE MODERN AFGHAN STATE

The modern Afghan state derives from the short-live empire created by the Durrani Pakhtun chieftain, Ahmed Shah (1748-1772), comprising Afghanistan, Kashmir and the Punjab, following the decline of the Moghul and Safavid empires. It began to fall apart soon after his death, and by the 1820's Dost Muhammad Khan, who belonged to another branch of Ahmad Shah's Durrani tribe, the Barakzais, had established himself as ruler of the Kabul region.

By this time Britain was becoming concerned lest the influence of her rival Russia become dominant at Kabul and threaten the security of her Indian empire. So British forces twice occupied the country with the object of installing pro-British rulers in Kabul (1838-42 and 1878-1881), encountering stubborn resistance and suffering serious reverses on both occasions. Nevertheless in the 1880's, under the rule of Dost Muhammad's grandson, Abd al-Rahman Khan (1880-1901), Afghanistan became virtually a British protectorate. Britain controlled its foreign relations (demarcating its borders with Iran and British India, and with Russian co-operation, Russia) and gave Abd al-Rahman the money and weapons he needed to extend his authority into previously autonomous regions such as the Hazarajat and Nuristan and to create a new, more centralised administrative structure. He is generally regarded as the founder of the modern Afghan state.

C. THE 20TH CENTURY

When Abd al-Rahman's successor, Habibullah, was assassinated in 1919, he was succeeded by his son Amanullah, who immediately invaded British India's North-West frontier, leading to a third Anglo-Afghan War and inducing Britain to restore to Afghanistan control of her own foreign relations by the Treaty of Rawalpindi.

Amanullah greatly admired the great Turkish moderniser, Ataturk, and he introduced a number of radical reforms aimed at strengthening the state at the expense of the traditional notables and the clergy, and changing social attitudes. For example, he brought in secular legal codes, founded new schools with modern curricula, discouraged wearing of the veil by women and altered the previous local system for selecting army recruits to one based on a national lottery.

There were two rather different reactions. On the one hand, following a revolt by the Shinwaris, the Pashtun tribes rose in rebellion in 1928 in protest at the encroachment of the state on their traditional autonomy. The other strand of opposition was more obviously stimulated by dislike of the westernising aspect of the reforms. Members of the religious classes demanded the establishment of a government truly conforming to Islamic law. They gave their support to a Tajik adventurer nicknamed Bacha-i-Saqqao ('son of a water-carrier') from the north of Kabul who was able to depose Amanullah and take control of the city from January to September 1929. However, Bacha-i-Saqqao was overthrown by a relative of Amanullah's, Muhammad Nadir, who raised a tribal army and took the throne himself in the autumn of 1929.

Nadir Shah inaugurated a policy of rapprochement with Britain and of more cautious modernisation. He went to great pains to win over the religious establishment and the tribal leaders, largely reversing Amanullah's policy of legal secularisation and abandoning attempts to reduce tribal autonomy. Nadir Shah's brothers, who acted as regents for his young son, Zahir, after Nadir himself was assassinated in 1933, continued with a policy of cautious modernisation, encouraging in particular agricultural and associated industrial development in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces. The country remained neutral during World War 2.

In the postwar period the pace of change accelerated somewhat. With aid from both West and East, large-scale agricultural and industrial development projects were inaugurated, communications greatly improved and education considerably expanded. At the same time, however, the British withdrawal from the Indian sub-continent in 1947 left a vacuum of power in the region which the USA seemed unwilling to fill. Relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union accordingly became much closer in the 1950's, when the King's cousin, Daud Khan, was Prime Minister The USSR began training military personnel and supplying arms to Afghanistan. A dispute with Pakistan arising from the Afghan government's claim to represent the Pashtuns living in her neighbour's Tribal Areas (the Pashtunistan issue), which led to closure of the border between them for long periods, encouraged Afghanistan to redirect much of her trade to the north. Meanwhile, left-wing ideas began to influence some younger Afghans and several left-wing nuclei were formed. Two of the most important were led by Nur Muhammad Taraki and Babrak Karmal respectively; both were pro-Soviet.

In 1963 Daud Khan resigned as P.M. and the King attempted to introduce a more democratic system of government. There were parliamentary elections in 1965 and 1969. Early in 1964 members of Taraki's and Karmal's groups united to form the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The party contested the 1965 elections and four of its members, all from Karmal's group, were elected to parliament. In 1967 however the PDPA split intó two principal factions known by the names of the newspapers they were briefly able to publish at this time, *Khalq* (people) led by Nur Muhammad Taraki and *Parcham* (standard) led by Babrak Karmal. The split resulted from disagreements over tactics, Karmal favouring a more cautious approach, rather than from any basic difference in political outlook. This difference in approach partly reflected the fact that Taraki and the other supporters of Khalq tended to be of rural, lower middle class origins, whereas Karmal and his Parcham followers were mostly from a wealthy urban, upper middle class background and often had links with the establishment. After the split, Khalq mainly recruited among the armed forces, and Parcham in the educational sector. However neither ever had much of a following. Although both claimed to speak for workers and peasants, they made little effort to recruit them and were out of touch with their aspirations.

In any case it is hardly surprising that the parliamentary experiment failed. It was undermined by strikes, the government's failure to cope with a serious drought at the end of the decade, and student unrest, much of it fomented by members of the left-wing groups, in particular by Babrak Karmal's Parcham faction. In general, the state remained weak, a fragile alliance between the royal family and the Durrani tribe as a whole, and powerful men from other communities, including religious leaders. Exposure to western influence had deepened the divisions within Afghan society, creating a small, educated elite dissatisfied with the status quo,

while most people remained attached to tradition, which they saw as synonymous with Islam. There was little sense of identity with the Afghan state or national feeling.

D. THE SAOR REVOLUTION AND THE ARRIVAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

In 1973 the King's cousin, Daud Khan, took power in a bloodless military coup, the King, who was on holiday in Italy, remaining there. Daud had the support of the pro-Soviet left in his coup, and his government initially contained several Parcham members. However, he subsequently eased them out of positions of responsibility during the next couple of years. Though as noted in section II.A, there was some economic progress while Daud was President, various proposed reforms were never implemented, and there was widespread dissatisfaction as the decade wore on.

However, Daud's principal mistake seems to have been to upset the USSR, possibly by his attempt to improve Afghanistan's links with Iran and Pakistan. It was in response to Soviet pressure that the Khalq and Parcham factions reunited to form the PDPA again in 1977 and a plan to seize power seems to have been devised. Nevertheless, the actual military coup which occurred in April 1978 (the Saor Revolution) was probably a more or less spontaneous response to Daud's attempt to arrest the PDPA leaders following the widespread demonstrations in Kabul which occurred after the death in mysterious circumstances of Mir Akbar Khyber, one of the founders of the Parcham group.

A PDPA government was now formed. However, factional rivalries broke out again almost immediately and the Parcham leader, Babrak Karmal, and most of his supporters were exiled. The Khalq leaders, Nur Muhammad Taraki, and his increasingly influential deputy, Hafizullah Amin, began to introduce wide-ranging and often inappropriate reforms in an attempt rapidly to transform Afghan society. Decree No.6, for example, was an attempt to eliminate rural debts and land mortgages by cancelling outright debts and mortgages arranged before 1973, and providing for the repayment of those arranged subsequently in instalments. Decree No.7 prohibited the payment of a more than nominal brideprice, and Decree No.8 set a low ceiling for individual landholdings, and provided for confiscation without compensation and redistribution of any excess.

However admirable the intentions behind these reforms, their execution was disastrous. As far as Decree No.6 is concerned the government failed to provide any alternative source of credit to the local moneylenders, and since very few people had any sort of written title to their land there were endless disputes about the ownership of mortgaged land. Nor did Decree No.7 improve the status of women. Many people's marriage arrangements were upset by it, and in general a woman's honour was seriously reduced in her own eyes, let alone those of her husband's or brothers, if she was given away free. Decree No.8 was clumsily implemented by inexperienced party cadres and no attempt was made to provide the new owners with the inputs of credit, seed and so on, they needed to be able to farm successfully on their own. An aggressive literacy campaign among rural women also upset many people, while the replacement of the old flag with a new red one seemed proof to nearly everyone that the government was in the hands of anti-Islamic puppets of the Soviet Union.

I Geography

A. NATURAL

1 Physical

Afghanistan is a land-locked country of high mountains and plateaux (average elevation 1,200 metres) in south Central Asia, about 450 kilometres from the sea at its nearest point. To the north lies the Soviet Union, to the west the Islamic Republic of Iran, to the south and east Pakistan and Pakistani Kashmir. To the north-east a long, narrow salient known as the Wakhan Corridor has a short frontier with the Peoples Republic of China. More than 1,350 kilometres from east to west and 900 kilometres north to south at its greatest extent, Afghanistan is about the size of Texas or the Iberian peninsula.

The dominating physical feature is the Hindu Kush mountain system. This is actually made up of several chains running across the centre of the country and turning north-east as they approach the Karakorum and Pamir mountains. The most important of these are, from west to east, the Parapomisus, the Firozkoh, the Koh-i-Baba, the eastern and central Hindu Kush and the Hindu Raj. Nao Shakh, 7485 metres, in the eastern Hindu Kush, is the highest peak. From this central axis lower ranges fan out to north and south. The summits of the central and eastern ranges are snow-covered throughout the year and there are several glaciers. The fault zones which run across the country cause on average 50 earthquakes a year.

There are four main river systems, the Amu Darya (Oxus) to the north, the Hari Rud to the west, the Helmand in the south and the Kabul river in the east; only the latter flows into the sea, joining the Indus at Attock in Pakistan. The Amu Darya and Hari Rud discharge into inland lakes in the Soviet Union and the Helmand into the low-lying Sistan basin, an area of marsh and salt lakes, most of which lies inside Iran. There are other salt lakes on the western and southern borders, as well as the freshwater Lake Shiwa in Badakhshan, Ab-i-Istada south of Ghazni and the beautiful lakes at Band-i-Amir north of Bamiyan.

Much of the south and south-west in particular is desert; to the south of the Helmand river is the sandy Registan and to the west the stony deserts of the Dasht-i-Margo and Dasht-i-Kash.

2 Climate

The climate is mostly continental with cold winters and hot, dry summers. Average annual rainfall is less than 21 centimetres, most of it occurring from December to April, though some areas in the south-east receive monsoonal summer rain and remain warm in winter.

3 Natural Vegetation

Most of the country is too dry to permit the growth of true forest and this is confined to the southern slopes of the eastern Hindu Kush, the Safed Koh and the Sulaiman mountains in Paktia. It consists predominantly of oak giving way with altitude to cedar and other conifers. Forests along the

The reforms had the result of seriously disrupting rural society without bringing much compensating benefit. Rebellions began to break out in many areas with uprisings and riots in the towns, especially in Herat in March 1979 when a number of Soviet advisers were killed. These revolts reflected a genuine sense of popular outrage at the extent to which the new government was interfering in people's lives and trampling on customs and traditions believed to have the sanction of Islam.

The U.S.S.R. now put pressure on Taraki to get rid of Amin, who was blamed for the regime's hard-line approach. But in September 1979 it was Taraki himself who was arrested and subsequently murdered on the orders of Amin, who now took complete control. At Christmas however Amin was killed in turn when Soviet troops occupied the country. A government headed by the Parcham leader, Babrak Karmal, with members of both Khalq and Parcham factions, was set up.

E. THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

With active Soviet assistance, Karmal's government began to try and create a National Fatherland Front to mobilise as broad a spectrum of support for the regime as possible. This did not prevent a major escalation in the conflict, and for the past 8 years Soviet and Afghan government forces have been fighting to contain the resistance fighters (*mujahidin*).

The *mujahidin* have often fought with reckless bravery, but have not on the whole been well organised (apart from a few exceptional 'commanders' like Ahmad Shah Mahsud in the north and Ismail Khan in Herat). Though it controls much of the countryside and has maintained a presence in and around Herat, Kandahar and Kabul, the resistance has still not succeeded in winning outright control of an important town, in spite of the large amounts of aid (including Stinger and Blowpipe ground to air missiles) it has received from various sources. In some areas, people have become disillusioned with the war and the behaviour of the *mujahidin* and have been induced to join defensive militias set up by the secret police, KHAD (now officially re-named WAD).

On the other hand the Afghan government's ability to stand up to the *mujahidin* has been seriously reduced by its own internal feuds. The principal split remains that between supporters of Khalq and Parcham, with each faction being further divided by personal rivalries and ambitions. Altogether, the economic and political costs of the occupation were high enough to persuade the new Soviet leadership to negotiate a settlement early in 1988 and begin withdrawing troops in May. By the late summer as many as half the troops had been withdrawn. Under its new President Najibullah, who succeeded Karmal in 1986, the government has been trying to pursue a policy of 'national reconciliation'. Overtures were made to Afghan opponents of the regime in exile for example, and in November 1987, a tribal assembly (*loyah jirga*) was convened to approve a new constitution which in theory permitted the formation of other parties besides the PDPA. This policy has not yet met with much success and further political changes are likely.

The resistance is even more divided. Seven main political parties dominate the Sunni Afghan political scene in exile in Pakistan and claim to be in control of forces operating inside the country. Three may be loosely described as 'traditionalist', and want something like a return to the *status quo ante* in Afghanistan, while the other four are more radical and call for

the creation of a new 'Islamic' political and social order. This difference in outlook recalls the divided character of the opposition to Amanullah in 1928-29.

Although an umbrella council with a rotating three-month leadership was formed in 1985, there are still deep differences of opinion and personality between the parties and they have never really been able to present a united front. In any case, commanders of groups of *mujahidin* inside Afghanistan often have considerable autonomy, and the Hazaras and Nuristanis in particular have their own parties. Of the main Shi'ite parties, the Harakat, Shura, Nasir and some small groups with close links with Tehran, such as Hizbullah and the Pasdaran, only the Harakat is actively engaged in fighting Soviet and Afghan government forces. The others are predominantly Hazara, and have preferred on the whole to concentrate on increasing their influence over the Hazarajat (mostly out of the government's control since early in the war). In the country as a whole, support for the resistance parties is patchy and there are few areas in which one party has sole control.

Table Three RESISTANCE PARTIES

NAME	SUNNI PARTIES LEADER	POLITICAL TENDENCY	PRINCIPAL SUPPORT
Hizb-i-Islami	Gulbuddin Hikmatyar	radical Islamic	Mostly Pashtuns in north and north-east (pockets elsewhere)
Hizb-i-Islami	Yunus Khalis	moderate Islamic	Nangarhar, Paktia and Kabul
Jamiat-i-Islami	Burhanuddin Rabbani	moderate Islamic	Dari speakers and Uzbeks in north and north-west
Ittihad-i-Islami	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Islamist	Paghman
Jabha-i-Melli Nejat	Sibghatullah Mujaddidi	traditionalist	Pashtuns in south, especially Ghilzais
Harakat-i-Inqilab i-Islami	Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi	traditionalist	Pashtuns in south, Uzbeks and Turkmen in north
Mahaz-i-Melli Islami	Ahmad Gailani	traditionalist (royalist)	Pashtuns in south, especially Durranis
Shi'ite parties Harakat-i-Islami	Asif Mohseni	Islamist	around Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif
Nasr		radical Islamist	south-west, central and north-west Hazarajat
Shura	Sayyid Beheshti	traditionalist	central and southern Hazarajat

F. CURRENT POLITICAL SYSTEM

In the areas controlled by the government, the political system is based on the Soviet model, with the Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary vanguard PDPA controlling the state apparatus, though the party's domination has recently been somewhat diluted as part of the policy of 'national reconciliation'. In areas controlled by the *mujahidin*, the local commanders operate their own rudimentary administrations. It appears that it is only in the north-east that an attempt has been made (by Ahmad Shah Mahsud) to create a wider administrative structure, known as the Supervisory Council of the North, in which commanders from all parties participate, and which has committees for finance, education, culture and health and a judicial apparatus.

G. MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES

President Najibullah, an Ahmadzai Ghilzai Pashtun, was an outstandingly able chief of KHAD, the secret police, until he succeeded Babrak Karmal as President and Secretary-General of the PDPA in 1986. Still relatively young, about 40 years old, he is a man to be reckoned with.

General Gulabzoi, Minister of the Interior, is also a Ghilzai Pashtun of about the same age. Trained as an air-force officer in the USSR, he has his own paramilitary security force (the Sarandoi), and leads the Khalq faction.

Hassan Sharq, the recently appointed P.M., was born in 1925, had a medical training and practised for some years. He was deputy P.M. under President Daud in the for a time in the mid-1970's and has for a long time been a Parcham sympathiser.

Zahir Shah, the ex-King, is now 74 years old and has shown little inclination to play an active role though he is very popular with most Afghans and has been encouraged to do by some resistance leaders, especially Gailani (and has also been approached recently by the government).

Sayyid Ahmad Gailani, leader of the Mahaz-i-Melli Islami, was born in 1936 and comes from a family with 'saintly' religious authority, and was a businessman before 1978.

Sibghatullah Mujaddidi (born 1929), leader of the Jabha-i-Melli Nejat, also comes from a family with charismatic religious authority, but studied at the Al-Azhar in Cairo and had the reputation of being an Islamic revolutionary before 1978.

Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi (born in 1920) an Ahmadzai Pashtun who leads the Harakat-i-Inqilab Islami, is a respected conservative nationalist figure and a distinguished religious scholar and was an M.P. for Logar in the 1960's.

Burhanuddin Rabbani (born ca. 1940), leader of the Jamiat-i-Islami, a Tajik from Faizabad in Bakakhshan, studied at the Al-Azhar and helped to found the new Islamic movement in Afghanistan (see section V.D).

Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Kharoti Pashtun from Baghlan, who leads the Hizb-i-Islami, is an ambitious man who uses the rhetoric of Iran's Islamic revolution and has often been accused of attacking members of the resistance and Afghan exiles who do not share his views.

Yunus Khalis (born ca.1920) , a religious scholar from an older generation, leads a breakaway Hizb-i-Islami.

Abdur Rasul Sayyaf (born 1947) studied in Mecca as well as at the Al-Azhar and has strong Saudi connections. He used Saudi money to set up his own party, the Ittihad-i-Islami.

Sheikh Asif Mohseni from Kandahar leads the Harakat-i-Islami, the Shi'ite party most heavily involved in the war.

V Religion

A. SUNNI ISLAM AND THE SHI'ITE SECTS

The 1987 constitution states that Islam is the religion of the state and the overwhelming majority of Afghans (99%) are Muslims, the only exceptions being small communities of Sikhs and Hindus in Kabul and some other cities. Most Muslims are 'orthodox' Sunnis, but between 15 and 20% are Shi'ites, of whom the majority are Imamis (the dominant sect in neighbouring Iran) and the minority, Ismailis, followers of the Agha Khan. The Imamis live mostly in the west around Herat (Fariswan) and in the central mountains (Hazaras), though there smaller long-established communities in Kabul and Kandahar (Qizilbash) and many Hazaras have moved to Kabul to work since the second world war. Ismailis mostly live in the north-east.

B. BELIEFS AND RITUALS

Sunnis and Shi'ites principally disagree over the spiritual role to be accorded to the Prophet Muhammad's descendants, whom the Shi'ites call Imams. The Imamis believe that there were twelve Imams (including the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, who married his daughter Fatima, their sons, Hassan and Hussein and nine of the latter's descendants) whose intercession can still be invoked by prayer and pilgrimage. Ismailis by contrast believe that their leader the Agha Khan is actually a living Imam who has inherited the charis[illegible]f the Prophet. Sunnis do not really recognise the Imams at all.

However, both Sunnis an[illegible]amis uphold the five 'pillars' of Islam, submission to Allah, prayer (five times a day for Sunnis, three for Imamis), fasting from dawn to dusk during Ramadan, charity (zakat) and pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). The main religious festivals are the 'little' Eid which celebrates the end of the Ramadan fast, and the 'big' Eid (the feast of the sacrifice), which commemorates the occasion when, it is believed, God demanded that Abraham sacrifice his son Ismail (in the Islamic version) but allowed him to substitute a ram. Both are opportunities to dress up, visit friends and enjoy a few days break. In addition Imamis have special ceremonies during the month of Muharram (the 1st month of the Muslim lunar calendar) to commemorate the martyrdom of the Imam Hussein in 680. Circumcision is an important *rite de passage* among both sects;

performed at the age of seven it has a religious significance. Ismailis do not adhere to the same pattern of ritual obligations as Sunnis or Imamis and tend not to be fully accepted as Muslims by them.

C. MYSTICISM, FOLK RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

In Islam there is a long-established mystical tradition known as Sufism. Since the 12th century Sufis have belonged to loosely-knit and often widely distributed religious fraternities or brotherhoods. In modern times the Naqshbandi(yya) and Qadiri(yya) have been the most influential in Afghanistan. The Sufis placed great emphasis on the supernatural powers supposedly possessed by their teachers (*pirs*), and this encouraged a belief in miracle-working holy men ('saints') among ordinary Muslims. The tendency to venerate religious figures of this kind often gave them considerable influence which could and still can to some extent, be converted into political power. Religious leaders with a reputation for miracle-working and sanctity are often temporarily at least able to build coalitions which overcome the extreme fragmentation of Afghan society.

In this century the Mujaddidi family (associated with the Naqshbandi) for example, had close links with the Ghilzai tribes, and Fazl Umar Mujaddidi (d.1956) even claimed the right to 'crown' the king and played an important part in coordinating the resistance to King Amanullah in 1928. Sibghatullah Mujaddidi leads one of the resistance parties today (*Jabha-i-Melli Nejat*), one of the other parties, the *Mahaz-i-Melli Islami*, also being led by a man from a family with this sort of religious appeal (Sayyid Gailani).

Another important aspect of this tendency to venerate holy men is a belief that pilgrimages to their tombs, or to the supposed tombs of figures from Islamic history and the Old Testament and the Imams (*ziarats*), cure diseases and bring good luck. The most famous of these pilgrimages in Afghanistan is that to the supposed tomb of Ali at Mazar-i-Sharif on New Year's Day (March 21st). This shrine is visited by men and women from the whole country, but visits to more local shrines are more commonly made by women who are often forbidden to worship in mosques. This religious segregation is an aspect of the sexual segregation which pervades Afghan society as a whole.

D. ISLAM, THE STATE AND CURRENT TRENDS

Although Islam lacks any sort of hierarchical organisation like that of the Christian churches, there was a religious establishment of sorts in Afghanistan, made up of judges in the religious courts and legal advisers (*qazis* and *muftis*), teachers in the schools and colleges, prayer leaders and preachers (*Imams* and *mullahs*), administrators of religious endowments and Sufi leaders. The state's control over this establishment has increased since the late 19th c.; prayer leaders in the larger urban mosques receive a salary from the government, a government department administers the religious endowments, and education, and to some extent law, have been secularised. However, the fact that religion is the one thing that the otherwise divided Afghans share, and that it is impossible to be fully an Afghan without being a Muslim, means that Islam has not lost its political significance.

Hence, it is not altogether to be wondered at that in the 1960's a group of Islamic radicals, led by Ghulam Muhammad Niazi and Burhanuddin Rabbani, who had studied in Egypt where they had been influenced by the ideas of the Muslim Brothers, a modern Islamic political movement, established themselves in the Faculty of Theology at Kabul University. Here they made many recruits, founding a movement known as the Young Muslims. When Daud took over in 1973 they went into exile in Pakistan (from where they attempted to raise a rebellion in 1975) and members of this group play a prominent role in the resistance today (Sayyaf, Hikmatyar, and Mahsud among others). They want to establish in Afghanistan a political and social order derived as far as possible from the Koran and the example of the Prophet. Their speeches and writings suggest that such a state would encourage a degree of social justice, but be conservative as regards the role of women, and not place much emphasis on political freedom (though it is only fair to point out that Hikmatyar has laid more emphasis on the need forcibly to remodel Afghan society on Islamic lines than have the other leaders).

E. RELATIONS WITH PERSONS OF OTHER FAITHS/HOW FOREIGNERS CAN BEST ADAPT

Muslims have traditionally regarded Christians and Jews as 'people of the book' (i.e.mentioned in Koran), to be tolerated if not accepted as complete equals, and Afghans have not in the past behaved aggressively towards Sikhs and Hindus in the cities. To avoid giving offence, the subject of religion should be approached sympathetically, and non-Muslims should behave with decorum (not drinking alcohol conspicuously, dressing modestly and respecting the privacy of Afghan women).

VI. General Cultural Background

A. LITERATURE

Poetry is the longest-established literary form and is still popular. Those Afghans who understand Dari share with Iranians the great heritage of Persian poetry. Afghan contributors to this include Firdausi (ca.940-1021), whose *Shah-nameh* ('book of kings') was written at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni. Based on ancient Iranian legend this tells the story of Iran from the creation of the world to the end of the Sassanian empire. Its heroes such as Rustam survive in folk culture. Later Afghan poets of renown were Sanai (d.1150) also associated with Ghazni, and Ansari (1006-1090) and Jami (d.1492) both associated with Herat, who all wrote mostly on religious and mystical themes. Khalilullah Khalil is one of the best known modern poets (the Parcham Politburo member Sulaiman Laiq has a reputation as a poet today).

Pashtu literature dates almost entirely from the 17th century. Two of the greatest writers in Pashtu are the warrior-poet, Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1690), and Rahman Baba (d.1709), who preferred mystical themes. Today, the *landai*, a stylized couplet, remains popular among Pashtu-speakers. Of the other languages spoken in Afghanistan, the Turkish group in particular has a well-established literary tradition, especially in Chagatai, the language of the Timurid court at Herat. Its greatest poet was Ali Sher Nawai (d.1501).

Prose writing was mainly confined to Persian and was not of the same quality as the poetry, but there is a large body of prose - history, collections of fables and anecdotes and mystical works for instance - to which Afghans contributed. The novel though was completely unknown until western influence made itself felt, likewise drama. Many Afghans have subsequently written novels and plays, including the late President Taraki, who wrote several works of fiction in Pashtu in a social-realist style, but the consensus today is that the late Sayyid Bahauddin Majrooh's Persian *Azdaha-ye Khodi* (Dragon of Selfishness) is the most important Afghan literary work published since World War 2. Very little modern Afghan writing has been translated but Geerken's *Afghanistan Auswahl und Redaktion* is a reasonably up-to-date anthology (see bibliography).

B. MUSIC

Although attitudes towards music were and still are to some extent ambivalent because music is associated with immorality and with people of low status such as gypsies, as well as being condemned by some on religious grounds, Afghans are usually fond of music. As might be expected in a country of such cultural diversity, a large number of musical styles, both 'folk' and 'classical' are found in Afghanistan. Nuristani music is probably the most distinctive 'folk' style. A much more widely distributed style in the north is the shared Uzbek/Tajik 'teahouse' music using the *dhamboura*, a two-stringed fretless lute, and the *ghichak*, a two-stringed fiddle. Uzbeks also have their own 'classical' musical tradition, but the most popular style among the educated generally is heavily influenced by Indian classical music. Recent exponents were the singer Ustad Sarahang and Ustad Muhammad Omar, a composer who also played the *robab* (which closely resembles the north Indian classical lute, the *sarod*). Shah Wali is a singer and harmonium player popular with refugees in the Peshawar area (Pashtuns especially).

C. SPORTS AND GAMES

The most distinctively Afghan sport is *buzkashi*, which involves a contest between men mounted on horseback for the headless carcass of a goat. During the winter buzkashi was played all across the north on public occasions, and to celebrate weddings and circumcisions. Keeping a *buzkashi* horse is expensive as the horses are not used for any other work, but owning one gives great prestige.

Hunting and wrestling are popular recreations. Betting on the outcome of partridge and dog-fights is fairly common. In Kabul especially kite-flying is popular with children.

D. ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Under the patronage of the Timurid rulers, Herat was the centre of a brilliant school of miniature painting whose greatest exponent was Bizhad (1450-ca.1536). Subsequently the visual arts have not been particularly distinguished, though shrines, for instance, were often painted with attractive floral designs. Today a lively tradition of folk painting is widespread and is best seen in the decoration of lorries. Connoisseurs have long admired the quality of the carpets produced by the Turkmen in

particular, but nomad rugs (*kelims*) are also attractive. The wooden sculptures from Nuristan are of great interest.

As far as archaeology is concerned, Afghanistan has a number of sites which have yielded a wealth of interesting artifacts, many of which are on show in the Kabul museum, and there are remains from the prehistoric, Zoroastrian, Greek, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim periods. The most spectacular examples are probably the gigantic Buddhas carved out of the cliff walls at Bamiyan and the beautiful minaret at Jam in a spectacular setting in the mountains of Ghor. The finest complex of medieval buildings is at Herat (seriously damaged during the last few years). There has been nothing to equal it since, though Kandahar has some attractive 18th century buildings, such as the mausoleums of Ahmad Shah Durrani and the Ghilzai leader, Mir Wais, and the Shrine of the Prophet's Cloak.

VII Health

A. MORTALITY/MORBIDITY RATES AND HEALTH CARE IN THE 1970's

Before 1978 health standards in Afghanistan were low and access to modern medical services limited, hospitals being located almost entirely in Kabul and mostly used by males. Although more than a 100 Basic Health Centres were opened in the provinces during the 1970's, curative care still only reached a small minority of the population. In 1978 there was one doctor per 26,090 people. Since 1980 health care in areas controlled by the Kabul government has apparently improved, elsewhere the only qualified medical personnel have been those provided by Western charities such as *Médecins sans Frontières*.

Statistics relating to Afghanistan are notoriously unreliable but in the 1970's life expectancy was about 35 years at birth and about 50 years for those who survived childhood. The crude death rate was 23 per 1,000 which was high (c.f. India - 13, Pakistan - 15, or Iran - 16), while the birth rate was as high as 48 per 1,000. Population growth was 2.3% per annum.

Infant mortality was one of the highest in the world (269 per 1000 according to the World Bank); 35% of children born alive died before the age of 5, about 50% of them in the first year. A large proportion of mothers died in childbirth, and adult women's health was generally worse than men's; for example the rate of reported illness among women aged 30 to 45 was twice as high as among men of this age. Diet was an important factor here. Babies are not usually given solids until nearly a year old, and high protein food is not eaten for another year. In general, men and boys are served first, and women and children make do with the food they do not eat.

Common diseases are those of the respiratory system (e.g. tuberculosis, pneumonia and bronchitis) and of the gastro-intestinal system (e.g. typhoid, cholera, dysentery). Hepatitis is widespread; malaria had at one point been almost eradicated but has reappeared in relatively damp areas like Kunduz. Eye and skin problems are widespread. However, a large proportion of childhood deaths are caused by only a few types of disease, respiratory illness (including whooping cough), diarrhoea/dysentery and measles in particular, against the background of poor diet.

B. TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Several traditional approaches to ill health exist in Afghanistan. In the first place, there are various magico-religious treatments based on the belief that evil spirits such as jinns and the evil eye can cause illness. Spirits are blamed for disorders of the nervous system, personality disorders and paralysis, and are believed particularly to affect women and young children. A mullah is often called upon to identify a spirit and drive it away, for example by reciting an appropriate passage from the Koran and providing a protective amulet (*tawiz*).

Another type of traditional medicine is known as *dawa-i-yunani* or Greek medicine. Based on a written corpus of diagnosis and treatment and a pharmacopia of herbal medicines, and deriving ultimately from the classical medical theories of Hippocrates and Galen, this operates in terms of the four elements of earth, water, fire and air, with which are linked the four bodily 'humours', blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm. Experts in Greek medicine live mostly in the towns, and in the countryside people treat illness more often simply in terms of the balance of 'heat' and 'cold' in the body. Illness is believed to follow when this balance is upset and treatment by diet is very important, food as well as disease being classified as more or less 'hot' or 'cold'. So for a hot illness like typhoid, for example, one should eat cold foods, like milk, yoghourt or vegetable soup. Other treatments, such as baths, hot and cold compresses and bloodletting (often carried out by barbers) may also be prescribed.

Bone-setters specialize in sprains and fractures and are usually effective. Finally, there are the traditional midwives (*dais*). Observers have emphasized the value of traditional medicine in Afghanistan and its practitioners, and recommended that the latter's experience should be taken into account when devising strategies to improve health standards.

VIII Law

A. THE OFFICIAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Since the early 20th c. a network of administrative courts, such as commercial courts, using statutory law has grown up alongside the religious courts in Afghanistan. In practice, both used mixtures of Islamic (Sharia) and statutory law and the distinction between them was one of degree in that judicial procedure in the Sharia courts was predominantly based on the Sharia whereas in the statutory courts it was mainly governed by statutes.

Although the state gradually nibbled away at the jurisdiction of the religious courts and tried to impose its own interpretations of religious law, the dual legal organisation persisted into the 1960's. With the aim of remedying problems caused by conflicts of jurisdiction between the two types of court, the 1964 Constitution contained provisions designed to produce a unified judicial system and did not specifically mention Sharia courts. However the latter continued to exist and the influence of religious law remained strong. The new Penal and Civil Codes introduced by President Daud in the mid-1970's were largely codifications of religious law. Religious courts, staffed by men with a training in religious law (Hanafi school), continued to deal with cases involving family law and with some

criminal cases. The secular courts using statute law dealt with cases involving public security, civil servants, juveniles, traffic offenses and commercial disputes and were staffed by men with a western-style legal training acquired at Kabul University's Faculty of Law and Political Science.

The left-wing government which took power in 1978 does not seem officially to have modified the existing legal structure, but did its best to reduce the importance of the religious courts by encouraging *ad hoc* adjudication by newly-appointed local officials. At the same time "revolutionary" military tribunals were established to deal with anyone felt to endanger security and thousands of people were arrested, tortured and executed on suspicion of plotting against the state.

Since 1980 arbitrary arrests and torture have become less common in the areas controlled by the government but still continue. Religious courts presumably continue to exist. In the 1987 constitution reference is made to religious law, but it is only with regard to inheritance that its provisions are specifically stated to apply (article 29). Meanwhile, in those parts of the country dominated by the resistance, the religious experts (*ulama*) have reportedly enjoyed some success in introducing traditional interpretations of Islamic law. In some areas, for example, amputation of the hand for theft has been reported. As in many other parts of the Islamic world, there is a considerable demand among Afghans for the introduction of a legal system comprehensively based on Islamic principles as part of the creation of an Islamic state.

B. CUSTOMARY LAW

Given the traditional suspicion of the state and its institutions, many people still prefer to settle their difficulties whenever possible without having recourse to the official legal system. Among the Pashtuns of the eastern mountains in particular, the tradition of relying on *jirgas*, tribal councils of male householders, to sort out disputes, remains strong. Decisions are only taken after consensus has been reached, and they are based on a combination of Islamic law and tribal custom.

Among non-Pashtuns and non-tribal Pashtuns there was a similar reluctance to become involved with the state's legal apparatus. People expected their community leaders (*khans, maliks, beys*), and elders (*rish* or *mui sefids*) to settle disputes, though local commanders and *ulama* have probably assumed this role in many areas. The customary law in terms of which the *jirgas* and elders operated is still not fully compatible with Islamic law. Inconsistencies are most glaring among Pashtuns, among whom property continues to be inherited by sons instead of being distributed among male and female heirs according to Koranic rules. In addition the insistence on a man's duty to take revenge when his honour is impugned still leads to vendettas which persist from generation to generation, and ignores the fact that the blood feud is prohibited by the Koran.

Map 1. AFGHANISTAN

U. S. S. R.
Dushanbe
Darwaz
Khorog
Termez
Mary
Amu Darya (Oxus)
Shiwa L.
Faizabad
PAMIR
CHINA
Wakhan
Karakorum
Andkhoi
Akcha
Balkh
Khulm
Kunduz
Kunduz
Mazar-i-Sharif
Khanabad
Turkestan
Mashhad
Sar-i-Pul
Baghlan
Pul-i-Khumri
Maimana
Badakhshan
Khwaja Muhammad
Nao Shakh
7485
Chitral
Kokcha
HINDU KUSH
Band-i-Turkestan
Murghab
Balkh ab
Salang Tunnel
Nuristan
IRAN
PAROPAMISUS
Firozkoh
Bamiyan
5143
Koh-i-Baba
KABUL
Kunar
Hindu Raj
Hari Rud
Hazarajat
Jalalabad
Kabul
Peshawar
2068
Safed Koh
Khyber Pass
Farah Rud
3923
Ghazni
Gardez
INDIA
Shindand
PAKISTAN
Farah
Kajaki
Arghandab
L. Ab-i-Istada
Sulaiman Range
INDUS
Kandahar
Lashkar Gah
Sistan
Dasht-i-Margo
Registan
Chaman
Helmand
Quetta
Multan
Zahedan

Kabul — Rivers
Safed Koh — Mountains
Hazarajat — Regions
Roads
Railways
▲ 3923 — Heights in metres
International boundaries

0 — 200 km

IX Glossary

abi	irrigated land
aimaq	[illegible]ld Turkish term for 'tribe'.
arbab	headman, village representative
alaqadari	smallest administrative subdivision
ash	soup made of noodles and vegetables .
badal	revenge
bey	chief, 'big man'
chadri	loose, all enveloping garment worn by women
dai	traditional birth attendant
dawa-i-yunani	'Greek medicine' - traditional humoural medicine
dhamboura	two-stringed lute
Eid-i-Kabir	the 'great' festival of the sacrifice
Eid-il-Fitr	the 'little' festival at the end of Ramadan
ghijak	two-stringed instrument played with bow.
hajj	pilgrimage to Mecca .
Imam	among Sunnis nowadays usually prayer leader: for Imamis one of twelve charismatic relatives/ descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.
jirga	tribal council (Pashtu)
karez	tunnel dug into hillside to tap water table for irrigation
kabab	pieces of meat cooked on a skewer over a grill
kelim	rug
khan	chief, leader
khel	lineage
lalmi	[illegible]ng land .
malik	h[illegible] .
melmastia	hospitality (Pashtu).
mui or *rish sefid*	literally 'white hair' or `white beard'; village elder
mujahidin (sing. *mujahed*)	fighters in the *jihad* or holy war
mullah	a person with some background in theology and Islamic law
nan	bread
naswar	mouth snuff
pir	Sufi master

qabila (pl.*qabayel*)	tribe
qala	fortified house favoured by Pakhtuns
qalin	carpet
qaum	"local community", family, lineage,ethnic group
qazi	judge in Islamic court
robab	lute resembling N.Indian sarod
sharia	Islamic law
tawiz	amulet affording magical protection or bringing good luck
ulama (pl. of *alim*)	experts in religious law and theology
wali	provincial governor
wilayat	province
woluswali	sub-province
ziarat	shrine.

X Bibliography

General/Introductory

British Voluntary Agenices *The Afghan Tragedy*, British Refugee Council, London, January 1988

Dupree, L. *Afghanistan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 1973 and subsequent editions

Huldt, D. and Jansson, E. (editors) *The Tragedy of Afghanistan*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Croom Helm, Beckenham, Kent, U.K., 1988

Kraus, W. *Afghanistan Natur Geschichte und Kultur, Staat, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft*,, Hortst Erdmann Verlag, Tübingen, 1974 edition

Nyrop, R.F. and Seekins, D.M. (editors) *Afghanistan a Country Study*, American University, Washington D.C, 1986

I Geography

Humlum,J. *La Geographie de l'Afghanistan*, Gyldenhal, Copenhagen, 1959

II Economy

Carter, L. and Azoy, W. *Agriculture and Rural Reconstruction in Afghanistan*, Report for Coordinating Committee of P.V.O.'s, April 1988

Fry, M.J. *The Afghan Economy: Money, Finance and Critical Constraints to Economic Development*, Leiden, E.J.Brill, 1974

Grötzbach, E. (editor) *Aktuelle Probleme der Regionalentwicklung und*

Stadtgeographie Afghanistans, Meisenheim am Glan, Verlag Anton Hain, 1976

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan *The Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan*, First Report, May 1988

Wiebe, D. *Afghanistan ein Mittelasiatisches Entwicklungsland im Umbruch*, Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart, 1984

III Population

A. DEMOGRAPHY

Sliwinski, M. *Afghanistan 1978-87: War, Demography and Society.* Sponsored by the State Secretary for Human Rights (France) et al., forthcoming (previewed in *Afghanica*, Oxford, March 1988 No.2)

B. ETHNOGRAPHY

Azoy, W. *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1982

Centlivres, P. *Un Bazar d'Asie Centrale: Forme et Organisation du bazar de Tashqurghan*, Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1972

Doubleday, V. *Three Women of Herat*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1988

Digard, J.P. (editor) *Le Fait Ethnique en Iran et en Afghanistan*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1988

Schurmann, H.F. *The Mongols of Afghanistan: an Ethnography of the Mongols and Related Peoples in Afghanistan*, Mouton, the Hague, 1962

Tapper, R.L (editor) *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, Croom Helm, Beckenham, Kent, 1983

IV History

A. PRE-20th CENTURY

Fraser-Tytler, K. *Afghanistan: a Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967

Gregorian, V. *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernisation, 1880-1946*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1969

Macrory, P. *Signal Catastrophe: the Retreat from Kabul 1842*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1966 (published in the USA as *The Fierce Pawns*)

Masson, C. *Narrative of Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*, Volume 1, London 1842 (reprinted OUP, Karachi, 1974)

Singhal, D.P. *India and Afghanistan 1867-1907: a Study in Diplomatic Relations*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1963

B. MODERN HISTORY/CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Adamec, L. *A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Afghanistan*, Akademische Druck, Graz, 1987

Bradsher, H.S. *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, Duke University Press, Durham, New Carolina, 1985 edition

Ghaus, Abdul S. *The Fall of Afghanistan: an Insider's Account*, Pergamon-Brassey's, Oxford, 1988

Grevemeyer, J.H. *Afghanistan: Sozialer Wandel und Staat in 20. Lahrhundert*, Express Edition, Berlin, 1987

Hyman A. "The Afghan Politics of Exile", *Third World Quarterly*, Volume 9, No.1, pp.67-84, 1987

Roy, O. *L'Afghanistan: Islam et Modernité Politique, Esprit Seuil*, Paris, 1985 (in English translation *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1986)

Shahrani, N. and Canfield, R.L. (editors) *Revolutions and Rebellions* in *Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives*, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1984

Urban, M. *War in Afghanistan*, Macmillan, London, 1988.

N.B. this is only a brief selection of the rapidly expanding literature on recent history and contemporary politial developments !

V Religion

Ghani, A. "Islam and Counter-Revolutionary Movements" in Esposito, J.L. (editor) *Islam in Asia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1987

Dupree, L. "Saint Cults in Afghanistan", *American Universities Field Staff Reports, South Asia Series*, Vol.XX, No.1

Edwardes, D.B. "Charismatic leadership and political process in Afghanistan" *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.5, No.3/4, pp.273-299, 1988

Naby, E. "The changing role of Islam as a unifying force in Afghanistan" in Banuazizi, A. and Weiner, M. (editors) *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1986

VI Cultural Background

Auboyer, J. *The Art of Afghanistan*, Hamlyn, Feltham, Middlesex, 1968

Dupree, N.H. *An Historical Guide to Afghanistan*, Afghan Tourist Organisation Publication No.5, Tokyo

Geerken, H. *Afghanistan Auswahl und Redaktion*, (Moderne Erzähler der Welt No.54), Horst Erdmann Verlag, Tübingen, 1977

Hallett, S.I. and Samizay, R. *Traditional Architecture of Afghanistan*, Garland Press, New York, 1980

Parsons, R.D. *The Carpets of Afghanistan* (Oriental Rugs Volume 3), Oriental Textile Press, 1983

Slobin, M. *Music in the Culture of Northern Afghanistan*, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No.54, Wenner-Gren, University of Arizona, Tucson, 1976

VII Health

Buck, A.L. et al. *Health and Disease in Rural Afghanistan*, York Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1972

CINAM *Services for Children within Regional Development*, Provisional Report submitted to the Government of Afghanistan and UNICEF, Kabul, 1973

Management Services for Health *A Health Survey of Three Provinces of Afghanistan, A Tool for the Planning of Health Services*, Ministry of Health, Kabul, and Cambridge, Mass., 1977

Masudi, M.M. *Control of Malaria in Afghanistan*, dissertation submitted for MSc in Community Health in Developing Countries, Ross Institute, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London University, 1980

VIII Law

Kamali, M.H. *Law in Afghanistan: a Study of the Constitutions, Matrimonial Law and the Judiciary*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1985

Steul, W. *Paschtunwali: ein Ehrenkodex und seine rechtliche Relevanz*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1981

Weinbaum, W. "Legal Elites in Afghan Society", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.12, 1980, pp.39-57

border with Pakistan have been badly depleted since 1978. Much of the rest of the country has little vegetation or is covered with bush or scrub (e.g. *Astragalus, Cousinia, Acantholimon*).

Pistachio trees grow in a belt along the northern and southern slopes of the Hindu Kush with isolated junipers above. Stands of other trees, such as almond, plane, willow, maple, hazel and judas tree, also occur. Tamarisk and box grow along the Helmand in the south, and in the south-western deserts camel grass and other thorns are widespread. In the spring wild flowers such as tulips, irises, allium and anemones often carpet the ground.

4 Wildlife

Wild goats (ibex and markhor) and sheep (urial and Marco Polo), with their magnificent horns, are mostly found only in the north-east. Snow leopard, wildcat, gazelle, wolf, bear, jackal, hyena and fox reportedly occur in remoter parts, again the north-east in particular.

Trout and catfish are mainly found in the north, but barbel also occur in rivers in the south. There is a variety of birdlife, including 34 species of birds of prey. Reptiles are common and include snakes, land turtles and two species of monitor lizard which can reach 2 metres in length.

Insect life is varied and widespread, particularly flies and mosquitoes, the latter malarial in some areas (see VII.A). Scorpions occur frequently.

5 Natural Resources

Afghanistan has considerable mineral wealth, until very recently largely unexploited.

Table One NATURAL RESOURCES

MINERAL	QUANTITY (APPROX)	LOCATION
barite	1 million tons	Sangilayan (Herat)
chrome	not available	Hesarak (Nangarhar) and Muhammad Agha (Logar)
coal	400 million tons	near Pul-i-Khumri and Nahrin (Baghlan), Darra-i-Suf (Samangan) and elsewhere in north and west e.g. Karokh (Herat).
copper	280 million tons from	[illegible] 50 kms. S.W. of Kabul

	0.7% to 1.5% ore	
iron-ore	1.7 billion tons mixed haematite and magnetite (62% iron)	Hajigak (Bamiyan) (one of the world's largest deposits)
natural gas	100 -150 billion cubic metres	Jowzjan and Sar-i-Pul
oil	70-100 million barrels	Sar-i-Pul, Faryab
salt	n.a.	extracted near Khanabad and Taloqan; there is also a large deposit at Ghuk (north-central Afghanistan)
sulphur	20,000 tons	south of Mazar-i-Sharif
talcum	n.a.	large deposit near Jalalabad
uranium	n.a.	Khwajah Rawash (north of Kabul), between Herat and Shindand, and Khakriz (Kandahar)

Many other minerals such as mica, zinc, lead, asbestos, and nickel exist in workable quantities, as well as precious metals (gold and silver) and precious and semi-precious stones. The lapis lazuli mines are at Sar-i-Sang in Badakhshan, rubies are found at Djagdalak near Kabul, garnets in the Kabul area, beryl in the Nour valley in Nuristan and jade at Shah Maqsud near Kandahar.

Production of natural gas in Shibarghan began in 1967, nearly all of it being piped to the USSR. Oilfields as well as new natural gas fields near Sar-i-Pul to the south are reportedly coming on stream. Since 1980 exploitation of the iron ore, chrome, copper and uranium has reportedly begun.

B. HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

1. Crops

a cereals

Wheat is the staple of Afghan diet and is the most widely cultivated crop, followed by maize, barley and rice. Times of harvest vary with latitude and height. In the south, wheat requires irrigation and is sown in the autumn and harvested in the late spring (water usually being insufficient to allow a summer crop). In the north, wheat is sown in the autumn and harvested in the early summer and may be grown on unirrigated land (*lalmi*) Spring wheat is sown in late spring and harvested in late summer and generally needs irrigation. On *lalmi* especially, crop rotation is usually practised (e.g. winter wheat, barley, fallow, going back to winter wheat in the 4th year)

Times of sowing and reaping for barley are similar. Maize is sown in early summer and harvested in the autumn. Short and long-grain rice are grown in the summer where there is sufficient water; the long-grain varieties growing only in the warmer areas such as Nangarhar and Kunduz.

b vegetables, fruit, cotton and sugar

Afghans are skilful gardeners and grow many different vegetables, pulses (e.g. lentils and mung) and oilseeds (e.g. rape and linseed). Clover, lucerne and alfalfa provide fodder for livestock. Walnut, almond, medlar, apple, apricot, peach, fig and pomegranate trees are cultivated; mulberries do well in the mountainous areas of the north especially. Kandahar is famous for is grapes, while citrus fruits are grown mostly around Jalalabad. Melons are popular and many different varieties are grown.

Fresh and dried fruit are major cash crops. Cotton, planted in early summer and harvested in autumn, is also grown for the market, as are sugar-cane and sugar-beet, cultivated around Jalalabad and Baghlan respectively.

2 Livestock

In 1978 an estimated 25 million sheep and goats were kept for their wool, milk and meat, including karakul sheep with their valuable grey fleeces. Some 3.6 million cattle were used as draught animals as well as providing milk and meat. There were about 2 million camels, horses and donkeys, which in many areas were the only means of transport.

3 Agricultural Technology

Agriculture is still largely unmechanised. Ploughing, for example, is usually carried out with a wooden plough with a metal tip drawn by a pair of oxen which scrapes a shallow furrow from 15 to 20 cm.s deep. Animal, water, and in some areas wind power is used to drive ingenious wooden machinery for cleaning rice, crushing oilseeds and milling wheat and barley. However by the late 1970's many farmers had begun to use improved strains of wheat such as Mexipak as well as artificial fertilisers.

4 Irrigation

Though dry-farming is possible in some areas, most cultivation depends on irrigation. In the south long tunnels (*karez*) are used to draw water from the underground water-table and bring it to the surface often some distance away for irrigation. In the north water is taken directly from rivers and distributed by networks of canals and ditches. These irrigation systems need constant attention; a *karez* in particular has to be cleaned out every year, a difficult and dangerous task.

5 Agricultural Tenancy and Land-Holding

In the absence of any reliable survey, it appears that in the late 1970's about 25% of families owned no land at all, and a further 30% not enough to live on, so that the men had to work at least part-time as labourers or share-croppers on other people's land. Although a small percentage of families, perhaps 6%, owned about 40% of the land, and there were large proprietors in some areas (the south-west for instance), the average holding per family (between 15 and 18 hectares) was low compared with Iran or Pakistan. In 1978 the new left-wing government began a programme of land reform, confiscating the holdings of the larger proprietors and redistributing them among the landless. The result was greatly to disrupt agricultural production (see section IV.D), and in 1980 when it was announced that some categories of people might own more than the modest amounts of land permitted by the land reform law, land reform appeared to have been shelved. However, in 1985 the government announced that reform had in fact been continuing and that so far 688,520 hectares had been redistributed among 319,538 families.

6 Industry and Hydro-Electricity

Afghanistan's rivers offer considerable potential for hydro-electricity which is generated on the Kabul, Kunduz and Arghandab rivers.

Industrial development remains limited. Though a few workshops were set up in Kabul in the late 19th century, industrialisation did not really begin until the 1930's and is still largely confined to textiles, cotton-processing, soap, cement and fruit-canning.

C. REGIONAL OVERVIEW [see map]

1 Wakhan Corridor and Badakhshan

One of the world's most inhospitable mountain landscapes, the Wakhan supports a small population of Mountain Tajik farmers in the western valleys and a handful of Kirghiz pastoral nomads in the Pamirs to the east (for details of ethnic groups see section III.C). The rest of the province is also mostly mountainous too with a fairly small agricultural population, consisting mostly of Tajiks and some Uzbeks. The famous lapis lazuli mines are at Sar-i-Sang in the south.

2 The North

Consisting mostly of plains and the foothills of the Hindu Kush, this is the country's most important agricultural and industrial region. There is intensive cotton, rice and sugar-beet cultivation along the Kunduz river north of Baghlan. Karakul sheep are important in the north-west. Cotton is processed at Kunduz and Mazar-i-Sharif has a plant producing fertilizer. Shibarghan and Sar-i-Pul contain natural gas and oil fields. The country's most modern coal mine is at Darra-i-Suf in the south of Samangan province. Mazar-i-Sharif and Kunduz are the two largest cities (1978 population ca.55,000 and 40,000 respectively). Uzbeks and Tajiks

predominate in most parts with some Hazaras and Pashtun settlers, and in Faryab Turkmen.

3 The West

The upland provinces of Ghor and Badghis, inhabited by Aimaqs and Hazaras and some Pashtun settlers, support dry-farming and pastoralism, while there are important irrigated areas around Herat, Farah and Shindand on the high plateaux to the west. Herat is the country's third largest city (1978 population ca.100,000). Its population is mostly Farsiwan, while in Farah Baluch and Pashtuns predominate.

4 The South

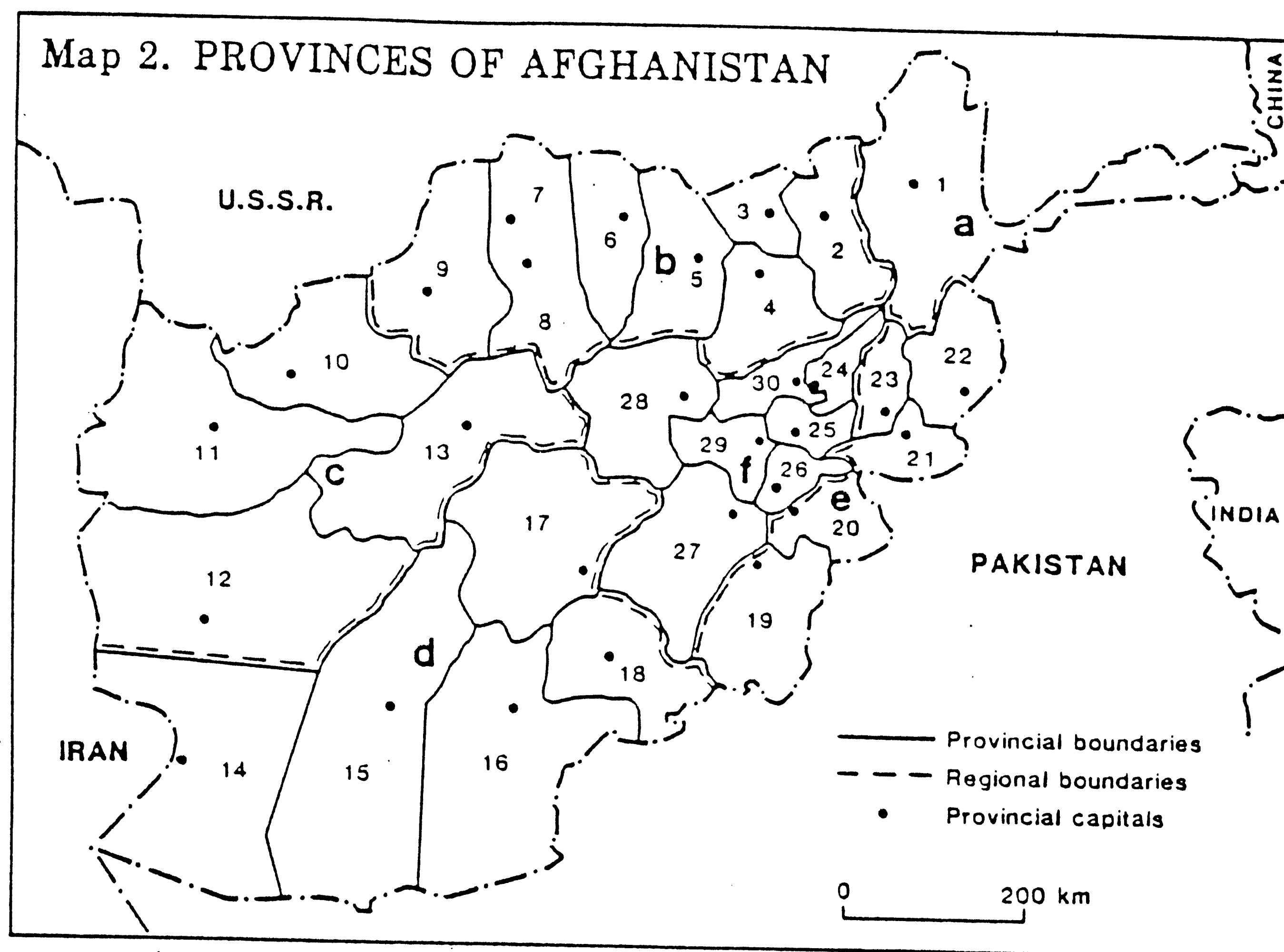
Much of the low-lying Nimruz and Helmand provinces is desert but the Helmand has been dammed at Kajaki and there has been massive agricultural development at Lashkar Gah to the south. Kandahar, the country's second largest city (1978 population ca.150,000), is situatted on a high plateau watered by the Arghandab and supports an extensive oasis agriculture. Uruzgan province is inhabited by Hazaras, elsewhere Pashtuns are the majority, except in Nimruz which is predominantly Baluch.

5 The South-East

Much of it is mountainous, mostly fairly warm in winter and experiencing some summer rain, supporting forests and intensive cultivation. Population is predominantly Pashtun, with Nuristanis in Kunar and Laghman as well as Pashai in the latter.

6 East-Central

A largely mountainous region with high valleys, the capital Kabul being 1,800 metres above sea level. It depends on irrigated farming and has extensive orchards. There is some industry in the Kabul area and Kabul is far and away the country's largest city, its population reportedly swollen [illegible] the effects of the war to [illegible]proaching a million and a half. The [illegible]lation of Kabul is mix[illegible] a and Parwan are mostly Tajik, in [illegible]ni, Logar and Wardak [illegible] re in the majority, and in Bamiyan [illegible]ras.



a *Badakhshan and Wakhan* - 1. Badakhshan (Faizabad)

b *North* - 2. Takhar (Taloqan), 3. Kunduz (Kunduz), 4. Baghlan (Baghlan), 5. Samangan (Aibak), 6. Balkh (Mazar-i-Sharif), 7. Jowzjan (Shibarghan), 8. Sar-i-Pul (Sar-i-Pul)* , 9. Faryab (Maimana).

c *West* - 10. Badghis (Qala-i-Nau), 11. Herat (Herat), 12. Farah (Farah), 13. Ghor (Chakhcharan).

d *South* - 14. Nimruz (Zaranj), 15. Helmand (Lashkar Gah), 16.Kandahar (Kandahar), 17. Uruzgan (Uruzgan),.18. Zabul (Qalat).

e *South-East* - 19. Paktika (Shahrana), 20. Paktia (Gardez), 21. Nangarhar (Jalalabad), 22. Kunar (Asadabad), 23. Laghman (Mehtar Lam).

f *East-Central* - 24. Kapisa (Mahmud-i-Raqi), 25. Kabul (Kabul), 26. Logar (Baraki Baraq), 27. Ghazni (Ghazni), 28. Bamiyan (Bamiyan), 29. Wardak (Maidan Shahr), 30 Parwan (Charikar).

Each province (*wilayat*) has a governor (*wali*) and is divided into a number of sub-provinces (*woluswalis*) headed by a *woluswal*; these are further divided into *alaqadaris* each administered by an *alaqadar*.

---

* Sar-i-Pul is reliably reported to be a new province created from parts of southern Jowzjan & Balkh provinces (no.s 7 & 8). It has not been possible to ascertain its boundaries.

II Economy

A. THE SITUATION IN THE 1970's

In the 1970's Afghanistan's principal exports were nearly all agricultural or pastoral products or the products of cottage industry, the only exception being natural gas. Dried fruit was the most important, followed by natural gas, cotton, fresh fruit, rugs and karakul lambskins. The USSR was much the largest importer of Afghan goods, followed by Pakistan, India, West Germany and the U.K. In all about 40% of exports went to Eastern bloc countries, often as part of barter agreements. The USSR was also the biggest exporter to Afghanistan, followed by Japan, West Germany, India and the USA. Major imports were tea, fabrics, petroleum products and manufactured and consumer goods. Smuggling amounted to more than 20% of commercial foreign trade.

During the 1970's there was modest economic progress and the agricultural sector in particular performed well; after 1974, for example, imports of wheat which had averaged 115,000 tons p.a. in the previous decade, ceased to be necessary. The balance of payments was favourable and foreign reserves grew considerably, to around $65 million by 1977-78, thanks partly to the growth in remittances from Afghans working in the booming economies of Iran and the Gulf.

B. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1978

Though disputed by the government, there is little doubt that the economic position has deteriorated since 1978. Agricultural production has declined seriously, *recovering* in 1987 to around 53% of 1978 levels according to one estimate[1]. The area under cultivation has shrunk by about a third, flocks of sheep and goats declining by as much as three-quarters, while the number of draught oxen has fallen by about 40%. This has led to a fall in the value of exports of fresh and dried fruit, cotton and karakul skins and the country no longer grows enough wheat to feed itself.

As a result the government has has relied more and more on supplies of food, oil and other materials from the USSR and other COMECON countries. Much of this has been paid for by the exploitation of new natural gas fields, with natural gas now supplying nearly half the country's income. Overall, the proportion of trade with the USSR has increased to more than 60% with exports to the west falling.

In almost every respect the economy and the infrastructure are being oriented towards the USSR, which has been developing natural resources, extending the Central Asian electrical grid into the north and building a road and rail bridge over the Amu Darya at Termez (and even continuing the railway south towards Pul-i-Khumri according to one report)[2]. As noted in section I.A, exploitation of the country's oil, copper, chrome and iron ore reserves appears to have begun since 1980 with much of the output going straight to the USSR for processing.

---

1 Swedish Committee for Afghanistan *The Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan* 1988 p.4.

2 *Afghanistan a Country Study* edited by R.F.Nyrop & D.M.Seekins 1986 p.170

AFGHANISTAN

By Hugh Beattie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAPS

TABLES